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them the authority to do that.

SENATOR HILGERT: And the regulations will be promulgated by DEQ...or, the Department of Ag?

SENATOR DIERKS: The Department of Agriculture, I believe.

SENATOR HILGERT: Okay. Thank you very much. And I do remember this debate from some years ago. And it was a concern at that time. If we're going to allow these composting...and 300 pounds was one step, and if we go to 600 pounds, we certainly want to make sure that the regulations are in place to safeguard the industry. And I appreciate it, Senator Dierks.

SENATOR DIERKS: Let me expand on that a little bit,...

SENATOR HILGERT: Sure.

SENATOR DIERKS: ...if I may. I'll tell you how...what the ability is of some of the farmers who talk about the disposal. They thought if they could...if we allow them to dispose of a 600 pound carcass in a composting pile, they could split a 1,200 pound carcass and put a 600 pound half in one place and another 600 pound half in the other one. That's what we're facing (inaudible). A lot of ingenuity out there. But one of the reasons, of course, that the rendering plants are having difficulty financially is because they...they can't find a market for animal protein in animal feed today. They used to sell a lot of bone meal, which could be used in mineral manufacturing. But that is no longer...they can no longer do that, because we're not feeding animals in this nation animal protein, because of the BSE thing. That was the first thing, the prion that causes BSE. For years they've had difficulty rendering sheep, because sheep have this problem called scrapie. That's another prion that causes a wasting disease of the brain. So if you had a sick sheep, you took it down to the livestock...to the diagnostic lab at the University of Nebraska and got an autopsy, you had to wait and take the sheep home, because they didn't have anyplace to send it. So those things had to be buried. And it's just been pretty difficult, getting more difficult. This is the reason for most of the legislation